inquiry now abroad, and which bids fair to place our country among the first where such studies have been successfully cultivated. While we thus bestow praise where it is due, we cannot refrain from tendering our mite to the Geological Society of London, which has done so much towards elucidating the internal structure of England. Sincerely must it be wished, by every true lover of science, that these two societies may cordially co-operate in their common objects. Let this be the case, and we shall anxiously apply to them the spirit of the dying address of Father Paul to his country—"Estote perpetuæ."

COMMUNICATION FROM COL. MUDGE.

(Addressed to the Publisher.)

Edinburgh, 7th June, 1817.

SIR,

M. Biot and myself are extremely obliged to you, and thank you for your politeness.

In compliance with your wish to be made acquainted with the business which has brought us to this place, I have the honour to inform you, that in consequence of the trigonometrical survey, carried on under my direction, having been brought on so far into the north as to admit of the description of the longest meridional line passing through Great Britain, M. Biot, under the authority of both the French and English Governments, is arrived in England for the purpose of doing, in the several parts of our arc, the same series of experiments that had been formerly done by himself and the Commission of the Board of Longitude, at Formentera, one of the Balearic islands in the Mediterranean, and other stations on the French meridian, proceeding from thence to Dunkirk.

The object of these experiments is, to ascertain the force of gravity at certain parts of our meridian, as connected with that of France and Spain. The pendulum is now erecting in Leith Fort, where every convenience offers itself for the experiment, and every wish has been anticipated by the chief engineer, Sir Howard Elphinstone. When the operations shall be completed, we propose to proceed to Kirkwall in the Orkneys, and near that place, or some more convenient situation, if any such can be found, we shall again set up the pendulum, and the ordnance zenith sector, the workmanship of the late celebrated Mr Ramsden. Thus, while the experiments are carrying on to ascertain the force of gravity in that quarter, the observations will be made on proper stars near to the zenith, hereafter to be also observed, in finding the amplitude of the whole meridional arc. The base, now nearly completed in its measurement by Captain Thomas Colby of the Royal Engineers, in the vicinity of Aberdeen, will verify the sides of the triangles towards the northern part of our arc, connecting the Orkney Islands with the main land. It is probable that M. Biot and myself will leave this quarter for Inverness (where the ordnance sector is now deposited) about the end of this month, and we think it likely, if the weather should be fair, that our operations in the Orkneys will be finished early in August. When these observations shall be completed, we shall proceed to Yarmouth, on the coast of Norfolk, which lies nearly on the meridian of Formentera produced, and there we hope to be joined by M. Arago, member of the Institute of France, and one of the Commissioners of the Board of Longitude. By this co-operation, having accurately ascertained the latitude of this place, a notable addition will be made to the arc, running south from Formentera to Dunkirk, independent of the great one running north to the Orkneys; for we hope that the difference of longitude (being only a few degrees) will not have sufficient influence to interfere with the importance of this last connexion. We will repeat the experiments of the pendulum at Yarmouth, and afterwards proceed to Blackdown, near Weymouth, to the meridional limit of the English arc, where, having again observed the pendulum, and made observations with the zenith sector on the same stars as are to be observed in the Orkneys, our united operations will close with Messrs Biot and Arago erecting their clock at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. It was to be always expected, that whenever peace should arrive, the science of France and England would affiliate, and by the united operations, in this particular, determine the magnitude and figure of the earth, by experiments carried on on a greater scale than could be done in-

dividually, and with the utmost nicety and exactness. The whole arc, from Formentera to the Orkneys, will contain nearly 22° of the earth's meridian; and thence the quadrantal arc of the whole meridian, extending from the equator to the pole, being ascertained, will afford the best of all possible standards of length and capacity, whenever it shall be determined by the Legislatures of both countries to equalize their weights and measures by the same common standard. The great arc deduced from these operations will be found to pass over a part of Spain, all France and Great Britain: Belgium has already followed the example of France, and has taken the standard from the same natural source: thus, if by this participation, the three nations, from their united meridian, should agree to take the same standard derived from it, there seems little reason to doubt, the rest of the world, without loss of time or difficulty, would follow their example.

M. Biot and myself beg to return thanks to Mr Bain for his book on the variation of the compass, and with his compliments to yourself, I have the honour to remain, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

W. MUDGE.

Wm Blackwood, Esq.

SOME ACCOUNT OF 'BOWED DAVIE,' THE SUPPOSED ORIGINAL OF THE 'BLACK DWARF.'

MR EDITOR.

THERE is an evident propensity in man, to confer the stamp of reality or past existence on even the most imaginary characters that come before him, whether from the pen of the dramatist, novelist, or incidental story-teller. Accordingly, in conformity with this principle, I find the Quarterly Reviewers, in an article just published on the "Tales of my Landlord," pointing out an individual as the probable prototype and original of the *Black Dwarf*—or '*Cannie Elshie*,' of the ingenious and far-famed novelist. Now, sir, with a laudable regard to facts, the Reviewer has referred us to the actual spot where this supposed original is said to have resided. He has thus rendered inquiry practicable; and as I happen to know some particulars regarding the individual alluded to,—which bear the Reviewer's story out, as far as facts go, and correct it where exaggeration seems to have led astray—I here propose to lay them before your readers, whom they may perhaps serve to interest or amuse.

David Ritchie, for such was the name of this real dwarf, lived for many years in a small cottage on the farm of Woodhouse, parish of Mannor, Peeblesshire, and was very generally known in that part of the country, by the name of "*Bowed Davie o' the Wud'use*,"—a name given to him from his remarkable personal deformity,—his stature being short—his body thick—and his legs awkwardly bent—and although not altogether possessed of that spheroidal form which is given to the *Black Dwarf*, yet evidently affording us, in his personal appearance, an imperfect prototype of that mysterious personage. He also resembled Elshie in his temper, which was quite sour and misanthropical. This was particularly displayed in his conduct to a sister of his own, who resided many years in a neighbouring cottage, but from whom he was completely estranged. This cottage was erected for him by Sir James Nasmyth, and was given to him rent-free. It was remarkable for the lowness of the door, which was made proportionate to the size of the inhabitant. The cottage was surrounded by a garden, which was cultivated by Davie himself, and was long the admiration of every passenger who came through the sequestered vale in which it lay. It was, in fact, the richest garden for verdure and beauty which the surrounding country could display; its wall was nearly seven feet high—(a height uncommon in that part of the country)—and included some very large stones, which the dwarf himself was said to have lifted. The late Dr Adam Ferguson, who resided in the neighbouring mansion of Hallyards, used sometimes to visit Davie, as an amusement, in this retired spot; but I never heard that any thing remarkable occurred on those occasions. Mr Walter Scott was also a frequent visitor of Davie's, and was said to have held long communings with him.—So far the Reviewer's account of 'Bowed Davie' is consistent with facts; but I believe it may be affirmed, that he was never much remarked for his intellectual superiority, and that the